

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 05503 050616Z
ACTION NEA-10

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P 041215Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
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AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL CASABLANCA
AMEMBASSY RABAT

UNCLAS TUNIS 5503

USDOC FOR CAGNE

E.O.11652: NA
TAGS: BEXP, EGIP, TS
SUBJ: MAY 1978 MATERIAL HANDLING SEMINAR MISSION

REF: STATE 124696, USDOC 14171

1. WE RECOMMEND MATERIALS HANDLING TECHNICAL SALES SEMINAR RATHER THAN TRADE MISSION BECAUSE SUCH SEMINARS TEND TO HAVE GREATER IMPACT ON BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HERE AND FORMAT FACILITATES INVOLVEMENT OF LATTER. (OBTAINING INTERPRETERS, WHICH ELSEWHERE APPEARS TO BE IMPEDIMENT TO USE OF THIS FORMAT, IS NO PROBLEM HERE.)

2. FOLLOWING ARE DATA AND OTHER EMBASSY RECOMMENDATIONS KEYED TO STATE REFTEL REGARDING USDOC PLANSLFOR SUBJECT SEMINAR/MIS- SION: A. TUNIS, CAPITAL, IS RECOMMENDED AS SINGLE SITE FOR SEMINAR SINCE IT IS LOCUS OF BOTH GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS DECISION-MAKING. WE SUGGEST TWO DAYS OF MORNING SESSIONS, AFTERNOONS BEING DEVOTED TO BUSINESS CONTACTS. ONE FULL DAY SHOULD BE SCHEDULED
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TO VISIT THE TUNIS-LAGOULETTE PORT AND ONE OR TWO MAJOR INDUSTRIAL FIRMS IN TUNIS AREA, OR TO SHIP REPAIR YARD AND STEEL MILL AT MENZEL BOURGUIBA ABOUT 40 MILES NORTH OF TUNIS. B. LIGHT AND MEDIUM-SIZED INDUSTRIES ARE DEVELOPING AND EXPANDING IN ALL MAJOR TUNISIAN CITIES AND PARTICULARLY IN THE TUNIS AREA. INCREASINGLY THESE INDUSTRIES ARE

USING MATERIAL HANDLING EQUIPMENT BECAUSE QUALIFIED LABOR IS NO LONGER ABUNDANT AND CHEAP. PORTS ALSO NEED MATERIAL HANDLING EQUIPMENT BECAUSE OF RAPID GROWTH OF ACTIVITIES AND TO INCREASE EFFECTIVE CAPACITY THROUGH FASTER TURN-AROUND AND ONWARD SHIPMENT. HANDLING OF CONTAINERS, I.E., QUICK LOADING AND UNLOADING TECHNIQUES, ALSO IS OF GREAT INTEREST TO PORT AUTHORITIES AND THE RAILWAY COMPANIES. (EARLY 1977 PORT SEMINAR APPEARS TO HAVE TIPPED OPINION OF CONSERVATIVE PORT OFFICIALS TOWARD MORE USE OF CONTAINERS, FOLLOW-ON DISCUSSION WILL BE USEFUL.) EXPANSION OF MINING ACTIVITY, ESPECIALLY OPEN-PIT PHOSPHATE OPERATIONS, CALLS FOR MORE MODERN MATERIALS HANDLING TO AND FROM MILLS. THE THREE-QUARTER BILLION DOLLAR MISKAR OFF-SHORE GAS PROJECT--AND THE GAS PIPELINE FROM ALGERIA TO SICILY--ARE AMONG MAJOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN VIEW. C. HOISTS, LOADERS, ELEVATORS, FORKLIFTS, STATIONARY CRANES AND TRAVELING CRANES ARE AMONG EQUIPMENT WITH BETOLQALES PROSPECT. CONVEYOR BELTS ARE ASSEMBLED LOCALLY FROM IMPORTED PARTS. STATISTICS SHOW RAPID GROWTH IN IMPORTS OF MATERIAL HANDLING EQUIPMENT: \$14.1 MILLION IN 1975 AND \$21.8 MILLION IN 1976. QUALITY OF AMERICAN EQUIPMENT IS UNANIMOUSLY RECOGNIZED AND APPRECIATED. HOWEVER, U.S. PARTICIPATION IN MOST SECTORS OF MARKET STILL IS MINIMAL, APPARENTLY BECAUSE OF ABSENCE OF AGGRESSIVE MARKETING BY U.S. SUPPLIERS AND THEIR AGENTS. EAST GERMANS AGGRESSIBLY SEEKING LARGE CONVEYER BELT CONTRACT FOR PHOSPHATE MINE TO MILL OPERATION. AUSTRALIANS ALSO SELL IN MINING MARKET. JAPANESE UNCLASSIFIED

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STARTING TO SHOW INTEREST IN MATERIALS HANDLING MARKET AND COULD PROVE DANGEROUS COMPETITOR ON PRICING.

D. WE SEE GOOD POSSIBILITY THAT LOCAL SPONSORSHIP MIGHT BE PROVIDED EITHER BY GOVERNMENT AGENCY, SUCH AS MINISTRY OF EQUIPMENT OR MINISTRY OF NATIONAL ECONOMY, OR BY PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF IMPORTERS OF INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT. E. WE KNOW OF NO PROMOTIONAL EVENTS THAT WOULD CONFLICT WITH SEMINAR TIMING. ONLY HOLIDAYS IN MAY 78 ARE MAY 1 (TUNISIAN LABOR DAY) AND MAY 29 (U.S. MEMORIAL DAY). IF POSSIBLE, SHOULD AVOID SCHEDULING SEMINAR OPENING FOR A THURSDAY, REGULAR MEETING DAY FOR TUNISIAN CABINET, TO KEEP OPEN POSSIBILITY OF ATTENDANCE OF A MINISTER FOR OPENING CEREMONY AND CONSEQUENT FAVORABLE PRESS COVERAGE. F. FIFTH DEVELOPMENT PLAN (1977-1981 PROVIDES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF MINING SECTOR (PARTICULARLY PHOSPHATE), ROAD CONSTRUCTION, TRANSPORTATION, WATER RESOURCES (IRRIGATION AND DRINKING WATER),

MANUFACTURING AND ENERGY INCLUDING OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS AND PIPELINES. (SEE TUNIS A-097) ALL THESE SECTORS REQUIRE MATERIALS HANDLING EQUIPMENT. G. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY WORLD BANK OR SIMILAR LOANS SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO SEMINAR PRODUCTS. H. THERE ARE NO U.S. FIRMS HANDLING SEMINAR GOODS OR SERVICES

WITH THEIR OWN OFFICES IN TUNISIA. HOWEVER, NUMBER OF U.S.
FIRMS DEALING IN MATERIALS HANDLING EQUIPMENT HAVE BEEN REPRESENTED HERE FOR MANY YEARS. THESE INCLUDE: CATERPILLAR,
BUCYRUS ERIE, WABCO, FORD, ALLIS CHALMERS, CLARK MICHIGAN,
AND P AND H HARNISCHFEGGER.
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